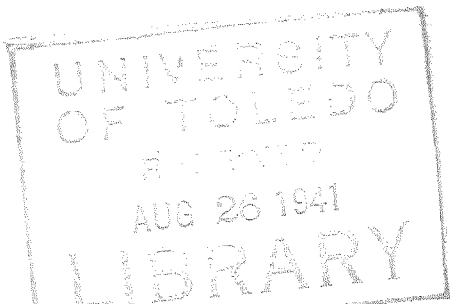


# MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION

ON

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE WORLD CRISIS



### NOTE

The net circulation has again increased. Judging from letters reaching us from all parts of the English-speaking world and, not least, from those in Britain who are hard at work upon the war effort, these monthly reviews which were in such great demand before the outbreak of hostilities and during the first puzzling phase of the war, are now proving even more useful and welcome. For these very many letters we are grateful. Pressure of work makes it difficult, sometimes impossible, to reply to them all, but we have been much encouraged. Moreover, we are always interested to hear our readers' views which are refreshing and instructive. The Committee is doing everything it can to meet the increasing demand for these Memoranda. We greatly regret, however, the constant refusals we have to send in answer to requests for many back numbers, most of which have long been sold out, and which we cannot reprint owing to paper shortage.

One of our pressing problems is to find space for all the subjects with which we want to deal and the reports which reach us. This number has been devoted to a review of the general situation and an account of Russia's policy. We believe that at this stage readers are anxious to have by them such a general review. Moreover, the persistent speculation and interest in Russian policy has led us to devote a whole section to it, which we hope will prove interesting.

We have been considering whether it would be desirable to find some distinct and precise name for these Memoranda. We should like to hear views upon this. These publications are not quite news letters in the ordinary sense, nor are they exactly comparable with monthly publications which contain articles by different writers. Each is perhaps more the current chapter of a work of reference upon contemporary events. If a name could be found which conveys this impression and which is at once easy to remember, and to talk of, it might be well to adopt it. Before doing so we should like to know what our readers think. Since it is the desire of a growing number of people in all parts of the world, and it has always been our intention, to continue publishing these reviews throughout the war and afterwards, this problem is certainly one ripe for consideration.

Copies of the July (No. 20) issue dealing with the fall of France can still be obtained from Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons (Canada) Ltd. at \$1.00 each.

KENNETH DE COURCY.

*September Issue.*  
1940.

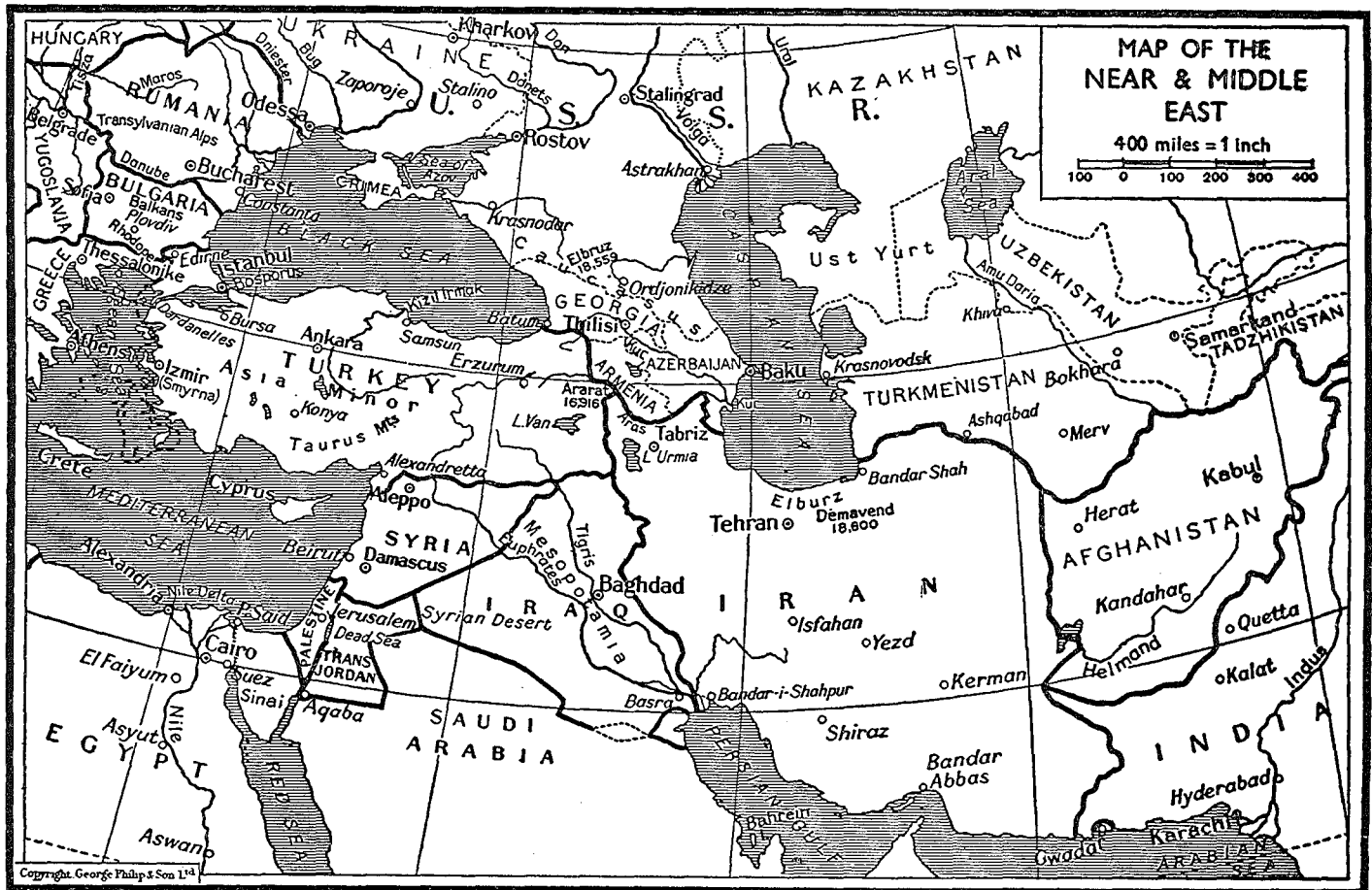
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PAMPHLET OFFICE

World War 1939-40



## A BATTLE NUMBER

The British public is in healthy and buoyant spirit. Nearly everyone recognises the gravity of the world situation; there is now little foolish optimism and wishful thinking. The views of the simple man have become surprisingly well balanced. Everyone realises how the whole world is looking to Britain for leadership, and that knowledge has proved exhilarating. More people in all classes have become interested in the Commonwealth, its origins, responsibilities, and destiny, than at any time before in our past history.

Public  
Spirit  
Excellent

If the public has rarely been more bored with ordinary small-town politics, it has seldom been more interested in great affairs. It is primarily concerned with three vital questions touching upon well nigh the highest statecraft and strategy with which this country has ever been concerned.

### FOR WHAT IS BRITAIN FIGHTING?

In 1800 a certain Mr. Tierney asked the Younger Pitt to state in a sentence the object of the war between Britain and France. He did so in striking and simple terms.

"He defies me to state in one sentence what is the object of the war. I do not know whether I can do it in one sentence, but in one word I can tell him that it is security against a danger the greatest that ever threatened the world. It is security against a danger which never existed in any past period of society. It is security against a danger which in degree and extent was never equalled; against a danger which threatened all the nations of the earth, against a danger which has been resisted by all the nations of Europe, and resisted by none with so much success as by this nation, because by none has it been resisted so uniformly and with so much energy."

An  
Ancestral  
War Aim

It is a remarkable tribute to the consistency of British policy that the same declaration is word for word, and phrase for phrase, applicable to-day. It is a great mistake to confuse the perfectly clear issue. Britain is fighting for security, that is the war aim of the simple man. It commends itself to millions all over the world outside the British Empire because the freedom of the nations is bound up with the fate of our Imperial Commonwealth.

Consistency  
of our  
Policy

Moreover, Britain would have it known that this war aim need in no way alarm or disturb the decent and pacific elements in Germany, for as lately as August 20th, Lord Halifax, speaking in the House of Lords, said:

Germany's  
Security

"It is also quite true, as we have said over and over again, that there is no one in this country who wishes to destroy Germany, or to deprive Germany of her legitimate place in Europe . . . ."

Our attitude to France during the Napoleonic struggle was also exactly similar. In 1813 the Allies issued a declaration, drafted in fact by Metternich, which set out the British attitude and reflected a policy to which in the peace we most honourably kept.

An  
Historic  
Parallel

"The Allied Powers are not making war against France, but against that loudly announced preponderance which, to the misfortune of Europe and of France, the Emperor Napoleon has for too long exercised outside the limits of his Empire. The sovereigns desire that France be great, strong and happy, because the power of France great and strong is one of the fundamental bases of the social edifice."

Britain's energy and statecraft were to be rewarded, for France was soon to abandon for ever her traditional policy of aggression. The military vigour and diplomatic skill of Britain were to play a large part in ridding Europe of a danger which had persistently recurred during the centuries.

### WHAT IS THE PLAN?

Since the breakdown of Europe many people have been asking themselves, and some have asked the Government, by what means can Britain attain her goal. What is our plan? It is impossible to answer a question like that without appreciating the enemy's position and glancing at his plans. Germany's situation, interests, resources, and aims are so complex that to discuss them fully in a memorandum of this length is quite impossible. We can, however, pick out the main factors which will influence her policy. Her pressing need is for a quick and decisive victory. Only in its achievement can she for long remain the senior partner in the Russo-German alliance, and avert the consequences of an intense, persistent, and developing British air offensive directed against the very heart of the Reich.

Germany's  
Pressing  
Needs

The Italo-German combination provides a land force so vast as to relieve the enemy of any immediate anxiety upon the Continent. It is probable that Germany already has at least 240 divisions and is in the process of forming new ones. Italy has not less than 85, and probably more. Food resources are sufficient for a very much longer period than is generally supposed. Oil supplies, while by no means inexhaustible, are nevertheless still adequate; Germany's reserves were considerable, and her production is greater than many reckon. Italian reserves are also great. Moreover, German domination of Roumania and the close collaboration between Berlin and Moscow opens up important foreign resources which, despite transport problems and Russia's own needs, must be taken into our account. None the less, the amount of oil needed to keep Europe at work as well as Germany and Italy at war, is naturally immense, and if the war is very prolonged, will prove in excess of the enemy's present reserves and supplies.

German  
and  
Italian  
Military  
Strength

Political and social problems within their territory and the conquered lands are still far from menacing, and will only become so with the success of British arms. We can be quite sure that Germany's political difficulties at home and abroad will be measurable in terms of Britain's military progress. Without doubt, therefore, the two great problems facing her are the intensity of Britain's air offensive and the balance of influence between Berlin and Moscow. Of these the former is by far the more pressing problem. Unless some means can be found of destroying the bases from which this offensive is launched, and the industrial units from which it is supplied, Germany's peril will become ever greater. Even if the armies of the Reich sweep into Africa and Asia, nothing will be gained if in the meantime Germany herself is crippled by an air offensive.

Of all this the German Government is perfectly well aware. Already the effect of Britain's air warfare has been great, and information shows how seriously civilian morale has been undermined. The removal of thousands of people from certain danger areas has not been carried out for fun. Industrial production has been hampered, communications disturbed. Most important of all, the morale of the German air force has been gravely affected by the heavy casualties inflicted upon it. There is thoroughly reliable evidence to support these conclusions.

Many of these factors are also at work in Italy, where the war is extremely unpopular in some quarters, and thoroughly resented in others. Reaction is one of the supreme factors governing human affairs; success, Disraeli argued, comes to those who profit from it. In the last two months Germany has swept from victory to victory, and this created amongst both the Italian and German people a strong sense of invincibility. The fact is, however, that despite these victories air warfare directed against the vital centres of both countries has become more—not less—intense. This has created a psychological reaction. It is vital that we should profit from it. We must throw our last ounce of effort into an intensified air warfare.

The enemy, taking all these things into account, has planned a general world offensive against the British Empire in order to gain a smashing victory before winter. This was to be divided into three parts.

### (i) THE ATTACK ON BRITAIN

The first part of this plan was an offensive against the British Isles, with the object of destroying the main source of industrial supply and the base from which air attacks are launched against Germany and Italy. With the destruction of the Islands, the enemy believed that India would go up in flames, that South Africa would collapse, that the defeatist elements in America would prevail, that Canada would scramble into the American fold and, failing United States assistance, Australia and New Zealand would be left isolated and at the mercy of Japan.

The German and Italian people were assured that an assault upon the British Isles would follow swiftly upon the fall of France, and that its success was certain. Elaborate plans were drawn up for an invasion, preceded by a great air attack. The weeks have dragged on, the summer has waned, and no full-blooded attempt has yet been made. In the meantime Britain has become a fortress. Aircraft and munitions production has increased. United States opinion has become fortified. Heavy air attacks have now been launched, the most severe of which may not yet have taken place. Up to the time of going to press, however, the amount of damage done is comparatively small. These attacks can in no way be regarded as the equivalent of a successful artillery preparation for a general offensive. Many of the night raids have been ineffective, while the daylight onslaughts have been amazingly expensive.

It is highly probable that we have inflicted far greater loss upon the enemy than the official figures suggest. During the French campaign we claim to have destroyed about 2,000 German aircraft. The actual total was higher. There had to be a far reaching reorganisation of the German air force. No doubt the enemy is vastly surprised by Britain's overwhelming superiority of performance in the air, and by their own poor one. It may be recalled that some months before the war we reported the morale of the enemy force to be poor, due to over-training and high peace-time casualties. The Germans have made the mistake of paying too little attention to the quality and equipment of their planes, and, above all, have foolishly taught the doctrine of invincibility. We, on the other hand, train our pilots carefully. We paid great attention to the quality of our aircraft and equipment, and we taught our men to believe that they would have a thoroughly tough job. Consequently, the early successes came as an exhilarating surprise and have been followed by a great sense of security and confidence. Most important of all, however, is the fact that our men know *we* did not start the war. They know, too, that it is now a life-and-death struggle for the freedom of every man, woman and child throughout the Commonwealth. However fanatical he may be, the German airman knows in his heart that Britain did not start the war and, that if Germany loses it, there will be no British Secret Police bullying German citizens for the next twenty years. This is not to argue that German airmen are not strong Nazis and supporters of the regime. Cross-examination of prisoners shows that they usually are. It is the subconscious, however, which often decides the issue in moments of great peril.

Germany has not yet used anything like the whole of her forces, but if intensive warfare is to cost her several hundred planes a week, and the attack should not be fully successful, she would be faced with a situation of appalling gravity.

From the end of September onwards weather conditions will become ever more unfavourable. Sporadic air warfare will no doubt continue throughout the winter. Britain will certainly suffer damage, some factories will be hit, communications will be disturbed. We must expect that our industrial output will suffer, even though the German offensive does not go beyond a limited continuance of the present operations. Next year the output of Canada and the United States will very largely, if not entirely, replenish any industrial losses we may suffer. At any rate, it seems certain that if Germany cannot attain mastery of the air this summer she will never do so and will, therefore, never find a solution to the second of these grimmer problems to which we referred earlier. Indeed, there are some neutral observers who have already come to the conclusion that through whatever difficulties we may have to go, and whatever anxieties lie ahead, we have in principle already set Germany an insoluble problem.

The  
Advantages  
of the Time  
Factor

In addition to the direct assaults which have taken place or are planned, there is the enemy's attempt to blockade us by mine-laying, the shelling of ports and ships from land and air, and submarine warfare. Although Germany has gained so many strategic advantages as the result of her European conquests, we have nevertheless overcome all attempts to cut off our overseas trade. The enemy's submarine losses have been great and we have good reason to believe that the effect has been so damaging as to create mutinies amongst some of the surviving crews. A large number of small new submarines have been recently launched, but to man these craft may be a difficult problem if losses continue on such a scale.

Submarine  
Losses

## (ii) THE MIDDLE EASTERN DRIVE

In the second place Germany and Italy have planned, and will shortly launch, an important offensive in the Middle East, with the object of isolating the Mediterranean Fleet and destroying the central arch of our defence. The danger of which we have written so frequently during the past eighteen months is now imminent. With the cooling weather will come a lively campaign in the vital area. The defection of the French has made a difference to Britain's position in these parts. Italy, who has concentrated large and highly equipped forces in Libya, is now in no danger from a flank attack, which was an important part of the Allied plan. She can turn towards Egypt and concentrate wholly upon that objective. Her forces are well supported by a number of highly trained German units with the fullest armaments.

The  
Threat to  
Egypt

She has a formidable Fifth Column in Egypt which has been elaborately organised and may cause a good deal of trouble if it is not dealt with quite ruthlessly before military operations commence. They had a wonderful run for their money between last September and the beginning of major hostilities early this summer. The native pulse is irregular.

Fifth  
Column  
in Egypt

In the Eastern Mediterranean the fullest possible Italo-German pressure has been brought to bear upon the Spaniards with the object of inducing them to launch an attack upon Gibraltar. That pressure has been strenuously resisted by moderate elements in Madrid, so far with success. Powerful forces are at work within and without Spain.

Spain and  
Gibraltar

In the Eastern Mediterranean Italy, making the fullest use of her footing in Albania, has brought great pressure to bear upon Greece, thus bringing into the forefront of international and military affairs one of Britain's most vital interests. Those who criticised the Polish Guarantee on the ground that it was strategically indefensible, were of the opinion that Britain's vital line of defence lay along the line formed by Greece and Turkey. Those critics were amongst the foremost advocates of our Greek and Turkish commitments. It is impossible to over-rate the importance of these countries. If Greece should fall into enemy hands a situation of the utmost gravity would arise, endangering our vital interests. Even those who take the advanced modernist view about the relative value of sea and air power in the Mediterranean recognise that even if the events of this war decided in favour of the latter, Greece will continue to occupy a place of importance amongst Britain's foreign interests. It was with all this in mind that Mussolini determined upon the seizure of Albania. The Allies ought in no circumstances to allow Italy to gain predominant influence in Greece as a result of military blackmail, nor can they possibly afford to permit the occupation of that country by enemy forces.

The  
Importance  
of Greece

The Greek Government, which has accepted a guarantee from Britain, will now be largely influenced by the vigour of British policy. General Metaxas has always been regarded as Germanophile. He underwent his military schooling in Germany. While maintaining and strengthening the British connection his policy has, at the same time, been conciliatory towards Rome and Berlin. Some of those closest to him are regarded as pro-Nazi; for example, the Press Minister, the Police Chief, and the Governor of Athens. The natural sympathy of the masses towards Britain is very great. The Englishman is still far and away the most popular foreigner.

Greek  
Policy

The General has pursued an active policy of military preparation and has stood by his country's commitments more rigidly than critics will admit. For example, not so long ago he had a number of quiet meetings with his General Staff at which he went over a list of some 1,500 excellent officers who had been expelled from the Army for their Venezelist leanings. Many of these officers were recalled. This was an example of putting the military interest first, and politics into the background. It was an encouraging act.

Military  
Preparation

For some time the Government has been hard at work improving fortifications. Efforts have also been made to build up a small air force. The number of pilots and aircraft, however, is very small. The Greeks show an altogether undue confidence in their military strength which must not deceive us. They will stand in need of immediate and considerable assistance in the defence of their country, and it is vital that it should be given.

Greek  
Confidence